



SPINAL COURIER

SPINAL CORD
COMMISSION

Vol. 7, No. 1

October 1995

NEW COMMISSION MEMBER

Governor Jim Guy Tucker recently appointed Sandra Turner of Little Rock to serve a 10 year term on the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission (ASCC). Ms. Turner replaces Glennis Sharp of Gassville whose term ended in January.

Ms. Turner sustained a spinal cord injury (SCI) in April of 1994 as a result of a motor vehicle crash which left her with paraplegia. She and her daughter Withers, 11, live in Little Rock where she has been very interested in community affairs. Previous to her SCI, Sandy was the coordinator of "Seven on Your Side," a consumer assistance program on Channel 7. She remembers well the program she coordinated in 1990 on the

passing of the ADA, when a wheelchair user (now fellow Commission member, Sloan Lessley) demonstrated the lack of accessibility at the television station, not knowing how important that would ultimately be to her.

A native of Mississippi, Ms. Turner holds a degree from the University of Mississippi and has had a varied career, from caterer and buyer for a large clothing chain to working in the Washington, DC offices of former Arkansas Congressman Beryl Anthony. For the past 11 years she has lived in Little Rock.

"I've always been an activist," says Sandy. "Always involved in



my community and in giving back to others - I hope that those skills can be of use in my role on the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission."

Please join her fellow Commission members and the staff of ASCC in welcoming Sandy Turner.

ASCC HAS A NEW NUMBER

The ASCC central offices in Little Rock now have a toll free 800 number to allow consumers, referral sources, field staff and the general public easy access to our offices. Those calling from outside Pulaski County can reach the offices at no cost at:

1-800-459-1517

If you are calling from inside Pulaski County, please use the local number.



Spina Bifida & Cerebral Palsy Research Project Begins

Arkansas mothers of children with disabilities will be asked to participate in a unique, statewide study being conducted by the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission (ASCC).

Mothers will be asked to answer questions about their past health and about the health of their children. The study's purpose is to investigate the possibility of a link between the mother's past health problems and the birth of a child with a disability. This is the first study undertaken by the Commission which looks at "cause" rather than the prevention of injuries or secondary conditions.

Surveys will be mailed to 400 mothers of ASCC clients with spina bifida and 500 mothers of Children's Medical Services clients with cerebral palsy. When asked about what response rate was expected, Tom Farley, the project's Principal Investigator, stated, "I expect a very good response. In preparing for this survey, I have talked with over 100 mothers across the state and have found all of them, without exception, to be cooperative and eager to share their experiences. This is a chance for all of us to fight back at these disabilities that harm our children."

ASCC spina bifida clients should look for their survey in the mail during late October or early November.

SPINAL COURIER

Published quarterly by
Arkansas Spinal
Cord Commission

Cheryl L. Vines
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Thomas L. Farley
Dee Ledbetter
Co-Editors

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BUCKLE UP!

ASCC'S PATTON TO RECEIVE PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Russell H. Patton, III of Jonesboro has been selected to receive the 1995 Arkansas Society of Certified Public Accountants' Public Service Award. Appointed to the Spinal Cord Commission in 1985 by then Gov. Bill Clinton, he has taken an active role in public service throughout his lifetime.

In addition to serving on the Commission, Patton also serves on the board of directors of Abilities Unlimited and the Northeast AR Rehabilitation Hospital, on the vestry of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Jonesboro, and is a member of St. Mark's Regional AIDS Interfaith Network. In addition, he is a member of the Greater Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce, the City of Jonesboro Land Use Committee, and serves as treasurer of the Northeast AR Streetrod Association and the Sons of the American Revolution. Currently he is serving his fourth term as Craighead County treasurer and is a certified financial planner, a certified government financial manager and an Arkansas real estate broker.

SPINAL COURIER Letters

Questions • Suggestions • Directions • Answers

BE SKEPTICAL OF UNCONVENTIONAL "CURES"!

Dear Editor:

The following item was printed in the July 29, 1995, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*:

Ivan Dardik, a New York City vascular surgeon, was stripped of his medical license for defrauding patients of up to \$100,000 each by claiming he could cure multiple sclerosis by using exercise to quickly raise and then lower the heart rate, state officials said in Albany.

This should be a reminder to readers to be skeptical of unconventional treatments or "cures" that you hear about from the newspapers or on television. Always check with your physician or ASCC Case Manager to see what is known about a new treatment.

Shirley McCluer, M.D.
ASCC Medical Director

ACCESSIBLE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Editor:

We have available a new brochure, *Park Accessibility: Buffalo National River*. Buffalo National River is located in the rugged Ozark Mountains of Northwest Arkansas. Although much of the area is steep and remote, the National Park Service is striving to make its facilities accessible to all segments of the population. The purpose of this guide is to provide physically challenged visitors information on handicap accessible areas within the park.

To obtain a copy of this brochure, write for information on "Handicapped Accessibility" and mail to:

U. S. Dept. of the Interior
National Park Service
Buffalo National River
P.O. Box 1173
Harrison, AR 72602-1173.

Or you may call me at (501) 741-5443.

Kristie Webb,
Information Receptionist
Buffalo National River

THINK TWICE - DON'T DO IT !

Dear Editor:

Those of you with physical disabilities who are currently participating in illegal activities (or are thinking about it), with the idea that if you get caught you won't be sent to prison because you are disabled, are in for a rude awakening. In the past that may have been true, but it certainly isn't any longer.

I have recently been working with an attorney for a high quadriplegic who was convicted of dealing in drugs. Despite our efforts, he was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison. He will probably be sent to the prison unit in Missouri where they already have several spinal cord injury inmates.

In Arkansas, there are at least 10-12 spinal cord injury inmates in state prison at any given time for a wide variety of crimes. The courts no longer hesitate to sentence someone with medical problems, no matter how severe they may be.

It is difficult enough to deal with the architectural barriers and other problems in the outside world, but I can assure you that it is many times worse in prison!

Shirley McCluer, M.D.
ASCC Medical Director

HIGH PROFILE!

KAY LYNN

This is the ninth in a series of articles profiling the ASCC Case Managers.

Kay Lynn began her career in counseling and case management in 1975 with the Western Arkansas Counseling and Guidance Center. She obtained her undergraduate degree from Arkansas Tech in Russellville and has attended UALR during several summers working on her graduate degree in counseling.

Over the years Kay developed her skills in crisis management, family counseling and needs assessment in various areas of the health care system. Bringing these skills to ASCC in 1989 has proven to be advantageous for the individuals with spinal cord disabilities in Northwest Arkansas. As a Licensed Social Worker, Kay utilizes her facilitating techniques, advocating strongly on her clients' behalf. Being a life-long resident of Crawford County has also increased her uncanny ability to find that "missing" resource or service.

Over the past several years Kay has successfully coordinated the Region VIII Fall Outing at Fort Smith's Carol Ann Cross Park. Later this year, Kay will be facilitating a peer support group for the individuals in her area. Plans are to conduct the support on the second Tuesday of every month. Having the opportunity to share feelings and ideas with other individuals can often decrease frustration and improve one's outlook on life. Kay is

looking forward to the development of such a group.

In addition to expertise in case management, Kay has always had a passion for writing. She has a quick wit with journalistic flair and has had a series of articles published. Kay continues to write short stories in her "spare time," so don't be surprised if she appears on the cover of a best seller one day soon.



FAMILY MEMBERS: Three grown and married children - two daughters live in New York and Dallas, one son (and one granddaughter, Rachel) lives in Ft. Worth.

PHRASE THAT BEST DESCRIBES ME: I'm still very curious about everything.

FAVORITE WAY TO UNWIND: Reading.

MY GUIDING PHILOSOPHY: Stay (as much as possible) in the solution and not the problem.

ACCOMPLISHMENT I'M MOST PROUD OF: Rearing three super children.

SOMETHING I'D CHANGE ABOUT MYSELF IF I COULD: I'd like to end the tendency to put on and take off those 10-15 excess pounds!!!

PERSON I ADMIRE THE MOST: Lavelle Evans Garr, my maternal aunt who died in 1992. She was the matriarch of the family.

LAST GOOD BOOK I READ: *Heading West* by Doris Betts.

MY DREAM VACATION WOULD BE: After I got myself in condition, I'd love to go down into the Grand Canyon (and come back up, of course!).

MOST IMPORTANT THING I'VE LEARNED AS A CASE MANAGER: The unpredictability of events and the reactions that follow.

STRETCHING . . . IT FEELS GREAT !

Grover Evans, Ph.D., Chairman, Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission

This is the first of a three part series.

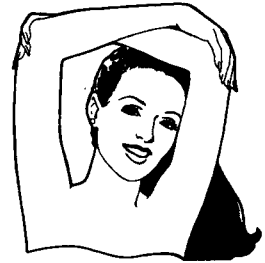
Regardless of one's age or flexibility, everyone can learn to stretch. You do not have to be a world class swimmer in top physical condition or have any athletic skills to stretch. Whether you exercise regularly, do housework, sit at a desk all day, or do nothing at all, the same technique for stretching applies. The methods are easy and gentle, conforming to individual differences in flexibility and muscle tension. So great news . . . you can do this!

When Should I Stretch? Believe it or not, stretching can be done any time you feel like it. That's right, at work, waiting for a ride,

in the car or van, at the desk, or on the porch. Always stretch before and after physical activity, but also stretch at various times of the day when you can. Here are a few examples:

- In the morning before the start of the day.
- At work to release nervous tension.
- After sitting or standing for a long period of time.
- When you start feeling stiff.
- At any time during the day, for instance, listening to music, reading, sitting and talking, while watching TV, etc.

But Why Should I Stretch? We all have heard, "Man, you better



change your lifestyle." Well, stretching relaxes the mind and starts up the body in a number of ways. It should be part of your daily life. This is what I have gained from regular stretching (and so can you):

- Increased range of motion.
- Maintenance of available range of motion.
- Reduction of muscle tension and feeling more relaxed.
- Increased coordination by allowing freer and easier movement.
- Prevention of musculoskeletal injuries.
- Development of body awareness (as you begin stretching the various parts of your body, you focus on them and get in touch with your body - you are beginning to know yourself).
- Promotion of circulation.
- Control of spasticity.
- It just feels good!

Stretching should be done at least three times a week to maintain flexibility. Remember, you can progress to daily stretching routines, especially if spasticity is present and functional range of motion is essential to perform your daily activities.

Please note: If you have had any recent physical problems or surgery, particularly of the joints and muscles, or if you have been inactive or sedentary for a long time, please consult your physician before you start a stretching or any exercise program.

In the second part of this series, I will discuss how to stretch and will give some examples.



ASCC Commission Chair Grover Evans shared a moment with Justin Dart (known as the "Father of the ADA") at the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC) annual conference in Hot Springs on September 7-9. Mr. Dart is the chairman of Justice for All, an organization promoting civil rights for persons with disabilities, and the former chairman of the President's Council on Employment of People With Disabilities. Dart and his wife Yoshiko, who have spent their lives advocating for people with disabilities, spoke at the DDPC meeting about the need to assure that the spirit and language of the ADA are maintained.

EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ROSES

Normally roses bloom in the spring, but in Jonesboro things are a little different these days. No, the Jonesboro ASCC office hasn't turned into a rose garden, even though it may seem like it.

Rose Trosper has assumed the duties of Case Manager since the retirement of James Smith. Rose has been employed with the Commission since 1989, so her familiarity with the Northeast Arkansas caseload is a definite asset. Her determination and years of persistence can now be channeled into providing quality services for individuals with spinal cord disabilities. The many individuals she has already contacted since June will certainly attest to her professional attributes and ability to provide excellent case management.

Rose Mary Agee, a lifelong resident of Greene County, will be providing the secretarial support in the Jonesboro office. Her years of expertise in



accounting, computers and customer service will be advantageous in maintaining a well organized and efficient office.

So, the next time you drop by the Jonesboro office don't be surprised if the office is in full bloom and you're greeted by the warmth of a Rose or Rose Mary, as the case may be!

IN MEMORY OF . . .

LARRY WEATHERFORD

Donations were made by:

Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Umphers
Rev. and Mrs. J.G. Hebert
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Pamplin
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Weisberger
Marcia L. Studler

was active in several organizations advocating for persons with disabilities.

A memorial scholarship in Stacy's name was established at UALR.

STACY WILLIS

Many friends of the Spinal Cord Commission will remember Stacy Willis, who died on August 19 at the age of 28. She was an ASCC Case Manager in Little Rock from 1992-93.

In addition to her work with the Spinal Cord Commission, Stacy served one year as president of the Arkansas Spinal Cord Injury Association and was also chairperson of the Disability Council for the Oasis Renewal Center. While a student at UALR, she

GREG RIDLEY

Greg Ridley, Prevention Specialist for the Spinal Cord Commission 1991-92 died August 30 in Chicago at the age of 31. Greg, along with co-worker Reggie Jackson, presented the "Harm's Way" prevention program to schools and other organizations throughout the state.

He was an accomplished wheelchair athlete and Therapeutic Recreation Specialist at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Greg was also a member of the Rollin' Razorbacks while living in Arkansas.

VISTA TURNS 30

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), a federal volunteer program of the Corporation for National Service, celebrated its 30th anniversary on Sept. 8 and 9, 1995, at the Holiday Inn Airport in Little Rock. VISTA volunteers, past and present, were invited (including ASCC's Karen Schmidt, Jim Averitt and John Gould).

A highlight of the celebration was the training seminars conducted by former VISTA volunteers and other individuals with special expertise. Displays representing the agencies being served by VISTA throughout the state were set up in the hotel foyer. Friday evening's program included presentations by former VISTA volunteers describing VISTA's efforts and achievements during its 30 year history. The evening was topped off by an Awards Presentation honoring persons who have made significant contributions to the success of VISTA in Arkansas.

THE CURRENT MANAGEMENT OF SPASTICITY

Frederick A. Boop, M.D.

Associate Professor of Neurosurgery and Anatomy, UAMS

Guest Writer for ASCC Medical Director Column

Following acute spinal cord injury (SCI), a clinical condition exists below the level of the injury in which there is loss of reflexes and muscle tone, termed spinal shock. Within days to weeks, the involved muscle groups regain their tone and, in time, demonstrate increased tone and exaggerated reflexes. This increase in tone is greatest when the limb is flexed, and less when the limb is straightened. It has been likened to the resistance of the blade of a pocket knife being opened and is, hence, termed a "clapsed knife reflex." The increase in tone and exaggerated reflexes are believed to be due to a loss of the inhibitory nerve cells normally found within the spinal cord. At times, the increased tone can be problematic. Spasms can be triggered by minor sensory stimulation of the extremities and can become so severe as to interfere with the ability to transfer, the ability to spread the

legs for toileting, or can lead to the formation of pressure sores in the ankles and knees. In some cases these reflexes can throw the individual from their chair or bed or lead to joint dislocations. When spasticity interferes with one's ability to function, then it must be treated.

If spasticity is noted to rapidly progress, one must first look for an underlying cause. Sometimes spasticity can worsen from something as simple as a developing pressure sore or bladder infection. At other times, the increased spasticity may be a sign of abnormalities within the spinal cord itself, such as a post-traumatic syringomyelia, or cystic fluid collection within the spinal cord. In such instances, the best way to treat the spasticity is to treat the underlying cause. However, in most instances, the development of increasing

problems with spasticity is insidious and no recognizable cause can be found. When this happens, the treatment is symptomatic and can be either medical or surgical.

Most of the drugs utilized in the treatment of spasticity are designed to mimic the inhibitory neurotransmitters which are lost in the damaged spinal cord. Baclofen (Lioresal), diazepam (Valium), and lorazepam (Ativan), all mimic the neurotransmitter GABA. Dantrolene (Dantrium) acts at the junction of the muscle and the nerve. These medications are effective, but all have side-effects. The most common and most limiting of these is sedation. As such, it has become recognized that direct administration of drugs such as morphine or baclofen into spinal fluid can act directly on the damaged spinal cord when given in minuscule amounts compared to that required orally. By this route, most of the systemic side-effects of the drugs can be avoided. If test doses, given by a spinal tap, prove effective, an individual can have a miniature pump inserted under their skin to deliver the drug continuously into the spinal fluid

Continued on page 7 - see Spasticity

SHIRLEY McCLUER, M.D. RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

ASCC Medical Director Shirley McCluer was the 1995 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the American Association of Spinal Cord Injury Psychologists and Social Workers at their annual meeting in Las Vegas, NV on September 6, 1995.

Dr. McCluer received her award in recognition of her long career in spinal cord injury rehabilitation and her ongoing work to address the "whole person" in rehabilitation treatment, including the person's psychological, social, spiritual and sexual needs and concerns.

Describing her as "our own Dr. Ruth," Ben Hollis, SCI Coordinator at the Little Rock Veterans Administration Hospital, presented the award to Dr. McCluer, quoting her as once telling him that



"the medical part of rehabilitation treatment is not that difficult; it is the personal part, learning to live with the injury, that is so difficult."

Dr. McCluer continues in her "retirement" to attempt to help address those living needs every day.

Congratulations Dr. Shirley!

SPASTICITY

Continued from page 6

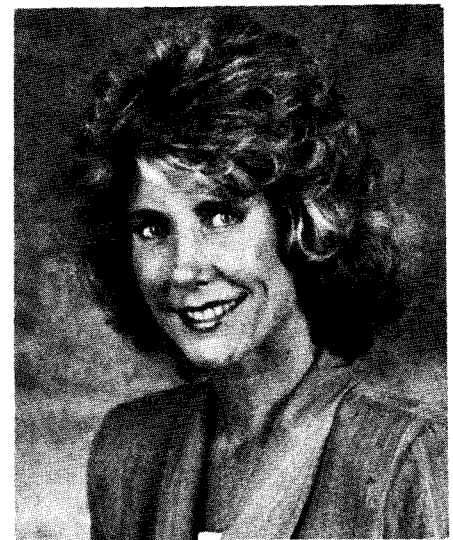
spaces. This pump can be refilled every week or two by an injection into its reservoir. This is a particularly effective treatment for spasticity in persons who still have useful function of their involved extremities.

Another simple treatment, selective dorsal rhizotomy, is the procedure of choice for spasticity in persons who still have ambulatory potential. This surgery involves intraoperative computer monitoring of the lower extremity muscle's response to stimulation of the sensory nerves, or the nerves which carry information from the extremities to the brain. Those nerves which cause a spastic response in the lower extremities when stimulated are cut, whereas those which give a more normal response are spared. This offers a permanent reduction in spasticity and is most effective in patients with spasticity of cerebral origin such as cerebral palsy.

The most effective treatment of flexor spasms of the lower extrem-

ities in patients with a complete SCI is the Bischoff myelotomy. This is a procedure in which a horizontal incision is made in the lower spinal cord disconnecting the reflex arc. In the patient with loss of voluntary motor function and bowel and bladder control, this is a permanent solution to their problem. It is most effective in patients who have non-healing pressure sores secondary to spasticity.

In conclusion, there are a variety of treatment options, both medical and surgical, available to the person suffering from spasticity. When spasticity seems to progress rapidly for no apparent reason, the first task is to rule out a secondary cause. If treatable causes have been ruled out, medical therapy is the first best treatment. Should that prove ineffective, or should the side-effects of the medication prove intolerable, a variety of surgical options are available, of which a few have been reviewed here. In the current era, the patient with a SCI should no longer have to suffer with troublesome spasticity.



JONI EARECKSON TADA COMING TO LITTLE ROCK

Joni Eareckson was only 17 when she was paralyzed in a diving accident in Virginia. Since that day almost thirty years ago, she has traveled around the world speaking and singing, including several performances at Billy Graham Crusades. A well known mouth-stick artist, Joni is president of *Joni & Friends*, a business which produces, among other things, a line of greeting cards painted by Joni. She is the author of several books.

Joni will be appearing at Robinson Auditorium in Little Rock on Monday, **November 20** with the music ministry of Calvary Baptist Church. She will sing and speak during the evening. Tickets are \$5 and may be purchased at Christian bookstores, or by calling **663-8303**.

and registered over one million new voters that year.

You will be hearing more about the NVRA, but if you have questions now, contact the Secretary of State Election Division at **1-800-262-4704** or **682-3520** tdd.

MOTOR VOTER ACT TO BECOME A REALITY

Many of you will remember the long discussions about the "motor voter" act during the 1992 presidential election. The discussions (often heated) were about the difficulty a new voter or someone without transportation had in registering to vote. The present process is just not "user friendly," particularly to many wheelchair users who have difficulty gaining access to courthouses and other municipal buildings.

All that will change in Arkansas on January 1, 1996, when the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) goes into effect in our state. There will be three new ways to register to vote:

- Motor voter (register at the revenue office)

- Mail in registration
- Agency registration

Agency registration means that the prospective voter will be able to register to vote or make changes in his or her registration when they visit or are visited by a representative from a state agency. Persons who apply for services from agencies like the Spinal Cord Commission, Rehab Services, Services for the Blind and even the local library will be offered the opportunity to register.






This will make your right to vote more accessible to you and increase the number of voters. The state of Georgia instituted the NVRA in 1994





1995 - 96 SCHEDULES

Rollin' Razorbacks

	Nov. 18-19	Away	Nashville, TN
	Dec. 2-3	Home	Fresno, Ottawa
	Dec. 16-17	Away	Nashville, Dallas
	Jan. 5-6-7	Away	Dallas, TX
	Jan. 13-14	Home	Las Vegas, NV
			Toledo, Dallas, University of Wisconsin Whitewater
			Golden State, Houston
	Feb. 10-11	Away	Champaign, IL
	Feb. 24-25	Away	Dallas, TX
	Mar. 9-10	Sectionals	TBA
	Mar. 21-23	Final Four	Portland, OR

For information, call 834-8513.

All home games at Sylvan Hills High School in Sherwood.

Junior Rollin' Razorbacks

Nov. 17-19	Carbondale	Saluki Invitational
Dec. 1-3	Dallas	Dallas Invitational
Jan. 20-21	Home	Mid-South Invitational
Mar. 15-17	Tulsa	National Championship

For information call 767-9185.

All home games at Sylvan Hills High School in Sherwood.

Fort Smith Shootin' Stars

Oct. 21	Tulsa	Tulsa Shootout
Nov. 11	Oklahoma	Muskogee Invitational
Dec. 9	Arkansas	Fort Smith Invitational
Jan. 13	Oklahoma	McAlester
Feb. 24-25	Regionals	TBA

For information call Doug Moore at 474-0825.

All home games at Westark Community College in Ft. Smith.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Wheelchair Wash and Party that was scheduled for Sept. 29 has been changed to **Friday, Oct. 27th**. It will be held at Our Way Apartments, 10434 W. 36th St., Little Rock, from **9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** In anticipation of Halloween, those dressing up can win prizes for costumes. Refreshments will be available. If transportation is needed, you can call LINKS. For more information, call Jim Averitt at 296-1784.

Modern Gun Doe Hunt, Dec. 1 & 2, 1995. Plan to arrive at 12:00 noon on Friday, Dec. 1st, at the Ramada Inn Hotel, **Batesville, AR**. The hunt will take place on Witt Stephen's property and is open to 10-15 hunters. This hunt will be special - ESPN will be filming the event for a special TV program. **Deadline for reservations: Nov. 10th**. For more information, call Arkansas Disabled Sportsmen Association at (501) 666-2523.

To have activities announced in the Jan. '96 issue of Spinal Courier, call the Editor at 296-1784 by 12/20/95.

Printed on recycled paper.

SPINAL COURIER

Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission
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Little Rock, AR 72207

Commission Members:

Grover Evans - Jonesboro (Chair)
Sloan Lessley - Calico Rock
Russell Patton - Jonesboro
Sheila Galbraith Bronfman - Little Rock
Sandy Turner - Little Rock

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